

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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R 260624Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8252

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 TOKYO 09527

FOR OES/ENP/EN

DEPT. PASS TO EPA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, JA
SUBJECT: GOJ WHITE PAPER ON ENVIRONMENT

1. ON MAY 16, GOJ RELEASED THE "7TH ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION" (ENVIRONMENTAL WHITE PAPER). REPORT COVERS PERIOD FROM APRIL 1977 TO MARCH 1978 (JFY 1977).
2. UNLIKE PREVIOUS LKPORZS, THE LATEST ONE TOOK STOCK OF THE PROGRESS MADE IN GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS FOR POLLUTION CONTROL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SINCE ENACTMENT OF THE BASIC LAW FOR POLLUTION CONTROL IN OYUN AND NOTED THAT ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IN JAPAN HAS IMPROVED TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT. A NUMBER OF DIFFICULT PROBLEMS STILL REMAIN TO BE ADDRESSED, THOUGH, NOTABLY THAT OF NITROGEN OXIDES.
3. THE WHITE PAPER STATED THAT THE TASK OF ENVIRONMENTAL ADMINISTRATION TODAY IS NOT SO MUCH GETTING RID OF POLLUT-

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ANTS AS PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL AMENITIES FOR A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE. AS TWO MOST IMPORTANT MEANS TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL, THE REPORT STRESSED THE NEED FOR RATIONAL LAND USE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

4. FOLLOWING IS BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE WHITE PAPER:
(OFFICIAL ENGLISH SUMMARY OF REPORT WILL BE PUBLISHED SOON

IN EA'S MONTHLY ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMARY AND LATER IN A SINGLE VOLUME. BOTH OF THESE WILL BE FORWARDED AS SOON AS COPIES ARE RECEIVED).

--"WHITE PAPER ON THE ENVIRONMENT FOR JFY 1977"

A. PRESENT STATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

ALTHOUGH JAPAN HAS EXPERIENCED THE MOST SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION IN THE WORLD, ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY HAS GENERALLY IMPROVED OWING TO POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES AND LEVELING OFF OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES. AIR POLLUTION CAUSED BY SULFUR OXIDES AND CARBON MONOXIDE HAS ABATED YEAR AFTER YEAR, WITH THE RESULT THAT AN INCREASING NUMBER OF AREAS HAVE NOW MET AIR QUALITY STANDARDS SET FOR THESE POLLUTANTS. NITROGEN OXIDES ARE STILL A MAJOR PROBLEM; THE SITUATION CANNOT BE SAID TO HAVE IMPROVED ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN POSSIBLE TO PREVENT THE SITUATION FROM BECOMING WORSE. THE AIR QUALITY STANDARD FOR THIS PARTICULAR AIR POLLUTANT WAS MET ONLY IN 8.1 PER CENT OF ALL MEASUREMENT STATIONS IN FY 1975 AND 9 PER CENT IN FY 1976. AS FOR WATER POLLUTION, CONTAMINATION OF WATER WITH TOXIC CHEMICALS HAS BEEN CHECKED TO A GREAT EXTENT. ORGANIC SUBSTANCES CONTINUE TO CONTAMINATE RIVERS AND LAKES; THERE STILL ARE MANY AREAS WHERE WATER QUALITY STANDARDS FOR ORGANIC SUBSTANCES HAVE NOT BEEN MET. SOME AREAS ARE BEING AFFECTED BY EUTROPHICATION, THERMAL UNCLASSIFIED

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EFFLUENTS, SEDIMENTS, AND ACIDIFICATION. CONTROL MEASURES FOR NOISE AND VIBRATION POLLUTION, WHICH HAVE ELICITED THE LARGEST NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS OF ANY TYPES OF POLLUTION, HAVE FAILED TO CATCH UP WITH COMPLAINTS. POINTS WHICH HAVE MET THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARD FOR AUTOMOBILE NOISE ACCOUNTED FOR ONLY 21.3 PER CENT OF TOTAL IN FY 1976. GROUND SUBSIDENCE HAS BEEN NOTED IN 58 AREAS IN 34 PREFECTURES. POLLUTION OF FARM LAND HAS BEEN CHECKED, BUT CONTAMINATED SOIL IN URBAN AREAS NEAR INDUSTRIAL PLANTS HAS POSED A SERIOUS PROBLEM.

B. PRESENT STATE OF HEALTH DAMAGE

AS OF JANUARY 1978, THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED AS VICTIMS OF AIR POLLUTION TOTALED 61,902 AND THE NUMBER OF THOSE RECOGNIZED AS VICTIMS OF WATER POLLUTION 1,839. UNDER POLLUTION HEALTH DAMAGE COMPENSATION LAW, THESE OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED PATIENTS QUALIFY TO RECEIVE COMPENSATION ENABLING THEM TO UNDERGO MEDICAL TREATMENT.

C. PRESENT STAGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

TEN YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE BASIC LAW FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION CONTROL WAS ENACTED. TODAY, THANKS TO ALL SORTS OF POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES, THE CRITICAL STAGE INVOLVING INCREASING LEVELS OF POLLUTION AND CONSEQUENT DAMAGE TO HUMAN HEALTH HAS BEEN PASSED. THE TASK CONFRONTING THE GOVERNMENT NOW IS NOT MERELY TO PREVENT AND CONTROL POLLUTION DUE TO INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES BUT TO PREVENT POLLUTION CAUSED BY THE PUBLIC'S DAILY ACTIVITIES, PRESERVE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, AND ENSURE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE NATION'S LAND AREAS. FROM THIS

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BROAD VIEWPOINT, THE NATURE CONSERVATION LAW WAS ENACTED IN 1972 AND LONG-RANGE AND COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES HAVE BEEN FORMULATED. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR PREVENTING POLLUTION ARE ALSO BEING MADE.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND LAND USE PLANNING

THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS TO ENHANCE THE WELL-BEING OF LOCAL INHABITANTS. PRESERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IS AN IMPORTANT REQUIREMENT IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR IT IS INDISPENSABLE TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE. THE INTERESTS OF LOCAL INHABITANTS MUST BE FULLY RESPECTED IN DETERMINING THE SCALE AND SUBSTANCE OF ANY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. IT IS ALSO NECESSARY TO EXECUTE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ASSESSMENTS TO PREVENT NEW POLLUTION CASES AND ECOLOGICAL
DETERIORATION INVOLVED IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT. WHAT IS
EXPECTED OF PLANNERS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS CREATION
OF PLEASANT AND ATTRACTIVE HOMES FOR PEOPLE IN THE LOCALE
RICH IN NATURAL FEATURES AND UNIQUE IN APPEARANCE. TO
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COPE WITH TRAFFICE POLLUTION DUE TO THE INCREASE IN THE
NUMBER OF AUTOMOBILES AND AIRCRAFT AND WITH HIGH-SPEED
TRAIN NOISE, IT IS NECESSARY TO TAKE STRENGTHENED AND
EXPANDED MEASURES DIRECTED AGAINST THESE SOURCES
OF POLLUTION IN THE INTERESTS OF PEOPLE LIVING NEAR SUCH
SOURCES. A BASIC SOLUTION TO TRAFFIC POLLUTION PROBLEMS,
HOWEVER, REQUIRES AN APPROPRIATE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM,
AND LAND USE AND CITY PLANNING.

E. SAFETY OF CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES

CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES ARE INDISPENSABLE TO HUMAN LIFE.
SINCE AROUND 1965, HOWEVER, THE IMPACT ON AND DAMAGE TO
THE ECOSYSTEM BY RESIDUES OF AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS SUCH
AS BHC AND DDT HAVE COME TO THE SURFACE. FURTHERMORE,
CONFIRMATION ON A GLOBAL SCALE OF THE ACCUMULATION OF
PCB IN THE ENVIRONMENT HAS CALLED ATTENTION TO THE
PROBLEM OF TOXIC CHEMICALS. IN 1973, THE GOVERNMENT
ENACTED THE CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE EXAMINATION AND
REGULATION LAW TO DEAL WITH CHEMICALS FROM THE STANDPOINT
OF PREVENTING TOXIC CHEMICALS FROM POLLUTING THE ENVIRON-
MENT. ONCE TOXIC CHEMICALS HAVE CONTAMINATED THE
ENVIRONMENT EXTENSIVELY, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RESTORE
THE ENVIRONMENT TO ITS ORIGINAL STATE. BECAUSE OF LIMITED
SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION ON THE EFFECTS OF TOXIC CHEMICALS
ON HUMANS AND ON THEIR BEHAVIOR IN THE ENVIRONMENT, IT IS
URGENTLY NECESSARY TO COLLECT AND ACCUMULATE SUCH INFORMA-
TION. ESTABLISHMENT OF A CHEMICAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM IS
NEEDED TO PROMOTE RESEARCH AND TESTING AND TO DEVELOP
MORE EFFECTIVE AND SAFER METHODS OF MANAGING CHEMICAL
SUBSTANCES.

F. FOR EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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USING THE BASIC LAW FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION CONTROL,
THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUCCEEDED TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT IN
PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING SERIOUS POLLUTION AND DISRUPTION

OF THE ENVIRONMENT. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE SO-CALLED SEVEN
TYPICAL FORMS OF POLLUTION HAVE NOT BEEN BROUGHT COM-
PLETELY UNDER CONTROL. IT IS NECESSARY, THEREFORE, TO
CONTINUE OUR BEST EFFORTS TO CONTROL THEM. HOWEVER, WE
MUST NOT OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN
JAPAN HAVE BEGUN ASSUMING NEW ASPECTS. FIRST, WE MUST NOTE
CHANGES IN THE MANNER POLLUTION OCCURS. POLLUTION DUE TO
INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES HAS ABATED CONSIDERABLY AND METHODS
FOR THEIR CONTROL HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED. ATTENTION IS BEING
CALLED TO OTHER FACTORS OF POLLUTION SUCH AS LIQUID WASTES
FROM HOUSEHOLDS AND TRANSPORTATION NOISE CONNECTED WITH
CITIZENS' DAILY LIVING ACTIVITIES. WE SHOULD ADDRESS
THESE PROBLEMS MORE VIGOROUSLY THAN EVER. SECOND, WE NOTE
THAT THE PEOPLE'S SENSE OF VALUES HAS LCHANGED. THEIR
ASPIRATIONS ARE NOW HIGHER AND MORE DIVERSIFIED. THEY
DEMAND NOT ONLY REMOVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS; THEY
WANT AMENITIES TO MAKE THEIR ENVIRONMENT MORE PLEASANT AND
COMFORTABLE. TAKING THIS INTO CONSIDERATION, THE ENVIRON-
MENT AGENCY LAST YEAR FORMULATED A LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. TO ACHIEVE A PLEASANT ENVIRON-
MENT FOR ALL CITIZENS, IT IS NECESSARY FOR ALL TO WORK
TOGETHER TO PREVENT ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION. FOR THIS
PURPOSE, IT IS NECESSARY TO MAKE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGE-
MENTS FOR LAND USE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES.

6. COMMENTS: THE LATEST WHITE PAPER ON THE ENVIRONMENT
IS SIGNIFICANT IN THAT IT INDICATES A REDIRECTION OF
GOVERNMENT ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY TOWARD A BROADER BASED
POLICY DEALING MORE EXTENSIVELY NOT ONLY WITH POLLU-
TION CONTROL BUT ALSO WITH THE PROMOTION OF PUBLIC WELL-
BEING, RATIONAL LAND USE AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE
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NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE. THIS REDIRECTION OF
POLICY HAD BEEN SUGGESTED BY THE OECD ENVIRONMENT COM-
MITTEE LAST YEAR BASED ON ITS FINDINGS OF JAPANESE
POLICIES. HOWEVER, IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE
ENVIRONMENT AGENCY CAN IMPLEMENT THE NEW POLICY SMOOTHLY.
A GOOD CASE IN POINT IS THE PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM WHICH EA CONSIDERS ONE OF
THE MOST IMPORTANT MEANS TO ENSURE THE UNPOLLUTED
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. EA'S EFFORTS TO COORDINATE THE VIEWS
OF VARIOUS AGENCIES AND ITS REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO PRESENT
AN IMPLEMENTING BILL TO THE DIET HAVE PROVED FUTILE SO
FAR BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF CONSENSUS ON THE NEED OR
PROCEDURES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS.
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SAS ID: 2541499
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOJ WHITE PAPER ON ENVIRONMENT
TAGS: SENV, PGOV, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
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